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Executive Summary

An estimated 40 RSVP volunteers will serve. Of this number all 40 will be placed in outcome assignments. Some of their activities will include sorting, storing and/or packaging donated non-perishable food for distribution. The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. At the end of the three-year grant, low-income and/or homeless individuals and veterans in the community who are hungry will be provided with a nutritious source of food through Loaves and Fishes. The CNCS federal investment of \$40,000.00 will be supplemented by \$16,000.00.

Strengthening Communities

The Clarksville-Montgomery County, Tennessee area is physically unique and our population of 139,000 is more diverse than many southern communities. It's the 5th largest city in Tennessee and the 2010 Census stated it's the 9th fastest growing city in the U.S. We have Austin Peay State University (with over 11,300 students annually enrolled) and the Ft. Campbell Military Base located in Montgomery County. Ft. Campbell is home to the Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne, the Army's only Air Assault Division; the U.S. Army web site states as of August 2015, we have 31,179 active duty military personnel assigned to Ft. Campbell with 19,116 family members and 23,776 military retirees living in our area. These factors combined with a strong local population create a uniquely diverse community. Our city-wide 2014 local census also revealed that 9% of the total population was 60 years of age or older. That 9% reflects approximately 12,510 local seniors who are eligible to participate in the RSVP program.

As happens with many areas experiencing rapid population growth there is also unfortunately an increase in crime. The community has seen an increase in methamphetamine sales, which is cheap, easy to make and easy to sell. When police shut down a meth lab, for safety reasons, the surrounding area is also evacuated, an entire apartment complex can be displaced, or the houses surrounding the lab location temporarily vacated. Absolutely no food items can be kept, everything edible is lost due to possible meth contamination. This means that anywhere from a few individuals to large numbers of families abruptly have no food as they are temporarily relocated. A similar situation happens when major house or apartment fires occur. These individuals suddenly lose everything, including the food they had purchased. The Red Cross provides temporary housing and clothing for the individuals whose homes burned but not food. In our community the primary emergency food bank is Loaves and Fishes, which serves as a food pantry and soup kitchen.

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Strengthening the community overall is accomplished by RSVP volunteers contributing their time and skills in non-profit agencies to help meet our community needs. Many of our local non-profit agencies have difficulty meeting their identified community needs due to lack of manpower because of their limited budgets. RSVP volunteers placements at these agencies help them to best meet their goals and strengthen the community.

Our project is ethnically and culturally diverse with volunteers coming from Viet Nam, Korea, Germany, England, India, Sweden and the United States. 34 of our 40 volunteers are retired military or are married to active or retired military personnel. To ensure local input in the program design we incorporate local ideas by: An annual needs assessment distributed to all clients, community partners and to the general public by our sponsoring agency. In fiscal year 2014-15, 932 individuals completed these comprehensive surveys.

Our Primary Focus Area is Healthy Futures. The rapid growth we are experiencing in the Clarksville area brings a significant number of individuals and families to our community in search of employment or better employment. In fiscal year 2014-15 the Montgomery County Career Center reported that 10,425 individuals applied for unemployment, which is approximately 7.5% of the overall population. Statistics from Bach Military Hospital on the army base show that in 2014 there were 1,184 veterans who came in seeking medical assistance who stated they did not have a permanent address, no job and no idea where their next meal would come from. These veterans are a difficult population to reach because the majority of homeless and/or chronically unemployed veterans have little trust of non-military personnel.

In calendar year 2014, Loaves and Fishes soup kitchen served approximately 190 adult meals daily with that number increasing to 245 - 265 meals being served daily during the summer months when children were out of school; a similar increase was reported during all school breaks. The Loaves and Fishes in-take data also show that they served between 20 to 41 homeless or out of work veterans on a daily basis and 11 times during the 2014 calendar year boxes of food were picked up by active duty military families in need of emergency food security.

Some of the service activities in our focus area of Healthy Futures include securing food for those in

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need by working with local grocery stores, restaurants and farmers co-ops to pick-up their day old or unused foods; then sort, store and/or prepare the food for the hungry. Additionally RSVP volunteers will prepare boxes of non-perishable food for distribution to those individuals in need of emergency food assistance.

These service activities lead to the following National Performance Measure outputs: All individuals and families who lose their food through a crisis situation will know where to come for emergency food. Hungry individuals will know where to come for food; the 190 civilian adults and the 20 to 41 homeless veterans who come into Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen each day will receive a hot nourishing meal. In addition to the adult meals being served daily, during school breaks another 55 to 75 school age children are also served a hot meal.

Our plan/infrastructure to ensure National Performance outcomes and outputs consist of: At the Loaves and Fishes site: Client data base, client sign-in sheet; client information form and food pantry check-out lists. All of this personal information is kept secured in a private locked office. Our agency also sponsors The Old Firehouse Day Shelter, which is a full service day shelter for homeless individuals and families. The services provided at the day shelter are geared towards helping individuals move towards self-sufficiency. One step in this process is collecting client information through personal interviews and creating a data-base of those in need. As a military community extra efforts are made to meet the needs of homeless or chronically out of work veterans. At the Day Shelter trained counselors assist with getting the veterans connected with Veterans Affairs for services and/or benefits they may be eligible for, we work closely with Operation Stand Down of TN to help veterans secure housing and we provide transportation to and from the Veteran's Hospital in Nashville. Our computer system allows us to share files with the TN Department of Human Services, the TN Department of Veterans Affairs and with the TN Department of Human Services. This sharing of information helps assure that each individual and/or family receives all the benefits and services available to them, while also preventing abuse of the system. Our agency also distributes USDA Commodities quarterly through our Community Programs to low-income individuals; this program also collects client information to help facilitate data collection for this vulnerable population.

34 of the 40 RSVP volunteers working in our Primary Focus Area are retired military or are married to active or retired military personnel. This strong military experience allows the RSVP volunteers to

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reach members of the homeless veteran population on a personal level that non-military volunteers frequently cannot achieve. Because Clarksville is adjacent to the Ft. Campbell Military Base a substantial number of the active duty military assigned to Ft. Campbell choose to retire and remain in our community. These veterans bring their vast experiences and knowledge with them as they enter retirement and many want to volunteer to give back to the community they love while also helping their less fortunate fellow vets.

Recruitment and Development

Our plan to create high quality volunteer assignments starts with a thorough initial interview before the RSVP application is even given to the potential volunteer. After completion of the application, a more comprehensive interview takes place to determine the volunteers interests, expectations, and skills; the individuals leadership potential is assessed based on past experiences and during the face-to-face interview and the last step is the discussion of potential volunteer sites. This meticulous pre-enrollment interview helps to ensure a positive assignment for the volunteer and a successful placement for the site. Successful site placement provides the volunteer with the opportunity to develop new skills by building on their past experiences in the business world, their military experience and/or personal interests. By providing an impactful volunteer opportunity with the site providing training and any technical assistance needed to be successful at the site; the volunteers are encouraged to utilize their past experiences to improve their community, they personally benefit through direct service in their in their own city. During the course of regular site visits the Program Director is able to monitor how the volunteer(s) and site(s) are working together. These visits help keep everyone on the right path, prevents small problems from developing further, helps the program stay current on any site changes and provides a strong infrastructure to help sustain the volunteer and keep the site relationship productive. Volunteers demonstrate and/or improve their leadership skills and gain better knowledge of local community organizations through on-site training. This training by the sites not only educates and helps prepare the RSVP volunteers for a successful volunteer experience but also helps the site better meet the identified goals in their Mission Statement. Each site has one or more RSVP volunteers who serve as lead volunteer(s) helping coordinate tasks between the site and volunteers. This added leadership opportunity encourages the RSVP volunteers to be continuously challenged. A positive and rewarding volunteer experience allows the RSVP volunteers to discover how service to their community enriches their lives while gaining new knowledge, building friendships and providing productive volunteer service.

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Our Primary Focus Area is Healthy Futures focusing on the number of individuals receiving emergency food from food banks and/or food pantries. The RSVP volunteers will be instructed in how, where and when to pick up food donations; properly sort and store the non-perishable items and how to maintain an inventory of all available food. They will also be trained by Tennessee State Food Inspectors twice a year on how to maintain a clean, safe and sanitary kitchen, dining area and pantry. These instructional workshops allow the volunteers to expand their knowledge and skills in handling food, working in a food prep area and preparing the meals. The training also allows the volunteers to see first-hand the total picture from picking up donated food to preparing the food to feeding the hungry. This on-site and state training turns individuals "just wanting to do something" into highly effective workers truly being able to safely, effectively and professionally meet an important community need.

The demographics of our community include a major military base, a large state university and an expansive international industrial park. Many retire from the military and international businesses choose to remain in the Clarksville area. Our program benefits from these retirees because we currently have RSVP volunteers from Viet Nam, Korea, Germany, England, India, Sweden, as well as all areas of the United States. 34 of our RSVP volunteers are retired military or are married to active or retired military personnel; most of them have traveled or been stationed at military bases throughout the world providing them with a variety of life experiences that they bring with them to our RSVP project. These individuals are of diverse races and ethnicities, 7 of our volunteers speak English as a second language and 3 of our retired veteran volunteers are handicapped. With our large active and retired military population we work to recruit veterans and military family members as RSVP volunteers to help us reach other veterans in need. Our RSVP project allows veterans working as volunteers to reach out and assist other veterans quicker, more completely and more compassionately than volunteers with no prior military experience. Our veteran volunteers have proven to be an excellent recruitment tool for securing other veteran volunteers. In fact, our most effective volunteer recruitments comes from current RSVP volunteers bringing individuals they know into the program.

Retaining and recognizing current volunteers is accomplished throughout the year by recognizing the volunteers and their sites as accomplishments and successes occur in featured media releases, interviews in TV/newspapers and individual recognition from the site and project. On a larger scale

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there is an Appreciation Luncheon in June and a Recognition Luncheon in December. Outstanding volunteers are recognized, site contacts and elected officials attend to express their appreciation for the work done; success stories are shared and volunteers receive gifts. These events allow for the program, sites, elected officials and especially the volunteers to reflect on the services accomplished in the community. The program overview presented at these recognition events gives the volunteers an opportunity to reflect with pride on their personal achievements in community service.

Program Management

The RSVP projects purpose and goals are explained to potential volunteer sites and discussions are held as how the project and site can work together to meet RSVPs goals as well as best meet the community needs. This discussion takes place prior to the MOU being signed for a three year period.

To ensure that our project is and remains in compliance with RSVP federal regulations our agency has established an RSVP Advisory Council with 5 members of our Board serving on this permanent committee. The RSVP Project Director has also established a strong working relationship with the TN State Office to guarantee consistent communication and understanding of CNCS instructions and updates.

As a Community Action Agency we are required to have a tri-partisan Board of Directors, we have board members who represent the low-income population, city and county elected officials and representatives of the private sector. Our RSVP Advisory Council is made up of 2 low-income representatives, 2 elected public officials and 1 private sector member as well as the agency Executive Director and Senior Corps Director. The RSVP Advisory Council meets bi-monthly, alternating with the agency's regular Board of Directors meeting. During our Board of Directors meetings the project director reports on activities in the RSVP project; confirms that all volunteers are eligible to serve and that site requirements are being met, gives updates pertaining to the program and updates the Board on the Advisory Council meeting.

To ensure that the RSVP project and site partnerships are viable long term solutions to the identified community need, the RSVP Project Director prepares an annual report for the volunteer sites Board of Directors. This report shows the number of hours RSVP volunteers served at their site; identifies successes and accomplishments for the year and updates them on any program changes. This report and the monthly site visits helps to create an open and productive volunteer environment, helps

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prevent any misunderstandings and makes sure no prohibited activities are taking place. Clearly identified community needs from the site and a well-defined understanding of the purpose and goals of the RSVP project provides mutual understanding and a strong partnership within the community. These frequent visits and continuing communication helps provide the infrastructure to sustain an effective volunteer site while working together to solve and/or meet the community need. We are also in compliance by conducting yearly safety evaluations to assure the safety of our volunteers at their assigned sites.

This continuing communication with sites and site coordinators helps make sure that when volunteers serve where they are successful and appreciated, that the volunteer experience will enhance their lives through meaningful community service, personal satisfaction and increased knowledge and skills.

Our plan/infrastructure to ensure the management of the volunteer stations are and remain in compliance with RSVP program regulations is accomplished with: Monthly site visits by the project's director to help evaluate the performance of the project and provide the opportunity for continuous discussion between site, the volunteer(s) and the project; and the annual report to the sites Board of Directors. These frequent station visits also assures compliance with program regulations and prevents any prohibited activities from taking place. Site visits also allow for ongoing discussions of the goals and objectives to best meet and identify any changing community needs and how they can best be met by working together. These meetings and discussions allow for any changes and/or adjustments that need to be made to the identified goal(s) for each site. We have no plans to graduate any stations at this time; however, if it should happen we would attempt to minimize the disruption by placing those volunteers at other RSVP sites or provide additional volunteer opportunities for them through our agency's community connections and our local non-profit network.

Clarksville-Montgomery County Community Action Agency (CMCCAA) has a strong track record and background in dealing with the RSVP projects Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures since 1978 when the agency was first established to help provide food and other services to those in need. Our Community Programs project now provides emergency energy assistance, rent assistance, a homeless day shelter and USDA commodity distribution on a regular basis, serving from 350 to 425 individuals each time. Community Programs has great success in reaching and assisting our area veterans in need with the Community Program Director and 2 of the Day Shelter staff being veterans themselves.

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We also manage the Head Start program for Montgomery County and are currently serving 269 low-income children and their families. A portion of the Head Start curriculum includes education and the practice of healthy eating and smart food choices. One of the programs our Head Start had has success with involves the 3 and 4 year old children making healthy food choices by "grocery shopping" in the classroom. After two weeks of classroom instruction on what is and what is a not healthy food, the children each took a basket and went shopping for real food displayed in the classroom. After their "purchase" of fruits and/or vegetables, they prepared healthy snacks for their classmates and took the recipes home to their family.

Each of our federally funded programs comes with their own specific federally required outputs and outcomes. Each program also has their own monitors and compliance visits to make sure that they are on-track for meeting their goals. CMCCAA has consistently achieved and even surpassed grant expectations with our FGP grant by exceeding the projected number of hours to be served, Head Start consistently meets their federal grant requirements and for the last 3 years has received a 4-Star Program rating and our Community Program grants for LIHEAP, WAP and USDA Commodities have never missed any of their grant expectations.

The infrastructure we have in place to ensure that the project is in and remains in compliance with the RSVP federal regulations includes a bi-monthly review by the agency's Board of Directors, alternating bi-monthly RSVP Advisory meetings, monthly fiscal revenue and expenditure reports and annual review of all volunteer station's MOUs. Part of the RSVP application process requires that all RSVP volunteers be eligible to serve in the program before they are assigned a site and before they become an RSVP volunteer.

The agency also has an agency wide independent audit conducted annually to help assure compliance in all areas of each program. RSVP has never had any audit findings in the last 15 years.

Organizational Capability

Clarksville-Montgomery County Community Action Agency's capability to operate the RSVP project is demonstrated through its successful direction of the Foster Grandparent Program since 1989 and RSVP since 2000. These two Senior Corps volunteer programs jointly contribute over 112,500 hours to the community annually. The plan and the infrastructure we have in place to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight includes weekly Program Directors meetings with the agency

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Executive Director to review RSVP activities, to ensure compliance with RSVP program requirements, and confirm accountability and efficient/effective use of all available resources, including in-kind. The agency's financial management system is as follows: 1) The Board of Directors formulates fiscal policies, delegate's administration of the policies to the administrative staff and reviews operations. 2) The Executive Director has responsibility for all operations and activities, including financial management. 3) The Fiscal Officer is responsible to the Executive Director for all financial operations. 4) All Program Directors are responsible to the Executive Director for program and fiscal management. Our agency uses the Grants Management Software (GMS), which is specifically designed for managing federal non-profit grants.

Monthly site visits, frequent phone calls to the volunteer stations and an ongoing dialog with the RSVP volunteers allows the project to develop an infrastructure and/or plan to oversee the volunteer sites to ensure that volunteers are in fact performing their assigned service activities.

Clearly defined staff positions are ensured with detailed job descriptions, a clear written policy on the agency's chain of command and annual employee reviews. There is one key staff position responsible for the management of both Senior Corps programs and that is the Senior Corps Director. This Senior Corps position is approved by the Tennessee State Office and, although outside the regulations, it has been successful for the last 4 years. The salary breakdown is 60% from RSVP and 40% from FGP. The project director is past Chair of Volunteer Tennessee (formerly Tennessee Commission on National & Community Service), has prepared and delivered training sessions at Cluster-wide and national conferences of the Corporation, has reviewed competitive grant applications, has prepared a VISTA application and been a VISTA Supervisor. Prior to employment with the corporation, the Project Director was the Parenting Coordinator for the local school system where she managed parent training for 17 elementary schools and 12 middle schools. These past experiences, in addition to 15 years experience as a RSVP Director help ensure the success and accomplishment of the program objectives. The agency's fiscal officer has been with us for 2 years; he has 2 Bachelor of Science Degrees, one in Accounting and one in Business Administration (Economics). His previous job experience in non-profits includes 5 years as Coordinator of Fiscal Services for Pennyroyal Regional Hospital where he reconciled the General Ledger with a \$31,000,000.00 annual budget. Our Executive Director has been with the agency for over 16 years and brings with her a wealth of experience and knowledge regarding federal programs and grants. She has been Director of

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Community Programs, Fiscal Director and now Executive Director of the agency. Agency wide annual staff reviews include both personal performance on the job and the accomplishments of program objectives.

Our organizational capacity to produce and implement internal policies and operating procedures is demonstrated through our agency's successfully managing federally grant funded programs since 1978. An agency wide Policy and Procedure Handbook is given to each employee and updated on a yearly basis; the handbook contains written governance on policies and operating procedures covering areas such as an organizational chart, chain of command for each program, hiring procedures, leave policies, fiscal policies, etc. As a grantee our agency was so impressed with the CNCS detailed RSVP background check regulations that we have incorporated the identical procedures into our agency's policies and procedures handbook for all our staff.

To help manage risk in accounting and purchasing, a multi-layered paperwork policy is used where an employee makes a purchase request to their immediate supervisor, who approves or disapproves it and passes it on to the Program Director, who approves or disapproves it and then forwards it on to the Executive Director who has final approval or disapproval power before the request is given to the fiscal office. This check and balance system helps eliminate mistakes and errors, while providing maximum accountability. In addition to these steps we have a Fiscal Committee comprised of 5 of our Board of Director members, 2 of these board members also serve on the RSVP Advisory Council; this committee reviews all monthly expenditures broken down by each program. The agency also has a detailed annual independent audit; if any program has any findings a corrective action plan is developed in writing by the Executive Director and the program director and then immediately implemented.

The infrastructure our agency has in place to assure robust financial management capacity includes monthly Revenue and Expenditure reports prepared by the fiscal office showing each line item budget amount, current expenses, and the year-to-date totals. The Board of Directors fiscal committee reviews all financial reports on a monthly basis, then the entire Board reviews and approves the financial reports every other month. Additionally we have an RSVP Advisory Council comprised of 5 members of our Board of Directors along with the agency Executive Director and Senior Corps Director who review all fiscal reports and expenditures pertaining to the RSVP project. Included in

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these monthly reports is the in-kind revenue report for each program to help track in-kind on a monthly basis. This in-depth review procedure for in-kind helps ensure allowability of donations per CNCS regulations. Our agency has a proven history of having the ability to meet match requirements (non-federal share) with all their federal grant funded programs. Our monthly inter-agency Revenue and Expenditure Reports show the in-kind recorded for the current month as well as the year-to-date total. This allows the Program Director, the fiscal office, the finance committee and the Executive Director an opportunity to monitor the non-federal in-kind totals in real time to help each program stay on track for their federal requirement. Each Program Director is responsible for their program(s) match requirements (non-federal share) with supervision and oversight from the fiscal department and the agency Executive Director.

The agency has over 37 years of experience in successfully managing federal and state grants. In 2014 they managed over 6.4 million dollars in federal grants. The grants annually managed by the agency are: federal Head Start grant, CNCS grants for FGP and RSVP, Community Programs grants from: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, U.S. Dept. of Urban Development, U.S. Dept. of Energy and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.

An independent audit firm conducts a lengthy annual audit of each individual program, as well as an audit of the agency as a whole to assure compliance and accurate reporting and record keeping.

Other

This is my response to the CNCS Clarification Letter request: "All of the work plans include the same number of anticipated unduplicated volunteers and anticipated volunteer contributions. Are there other volunteers contributing to these assignments besides the unduplicated volunteers?"

Response: Each of our volunteers will be serving at only one site. Because of that fact the number of unduplicated and duplicated volunteers is the same.

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

Not Applicable